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ABSTRACT

GUIDANCE NEEDS OF MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS, AS SEEN AT THE FIRST INVITATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GUIDANCE NEEDS OF MEXICAN AMERICAN YOUTH, ARE EXAMINED IN 6 MAJOR PAPERS. SPECIFIC GUIDANCE NEEDS IN AREAS RELATED TO HOME ENVIRONMENT, FAMILY INCOME, AND LANGUAGE HANDICAP ARE PRESENTED IN THE INTRODUCTION. THE SECOND PART INCLUDES 2 MAJOR REPORTS ON EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE THE MEXICAN AMERICAN CHILD. THE THIRD PART CONTAINS 3 SHORTER REPORTS WHICH WERE PART OF A SYMPOSIUM DEALING WITH SPECIAL PROBLEMS AND APPROACHES IN WORKING WITH MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS, INCLUDING PRESCHOOL CHILDREN. (CM)

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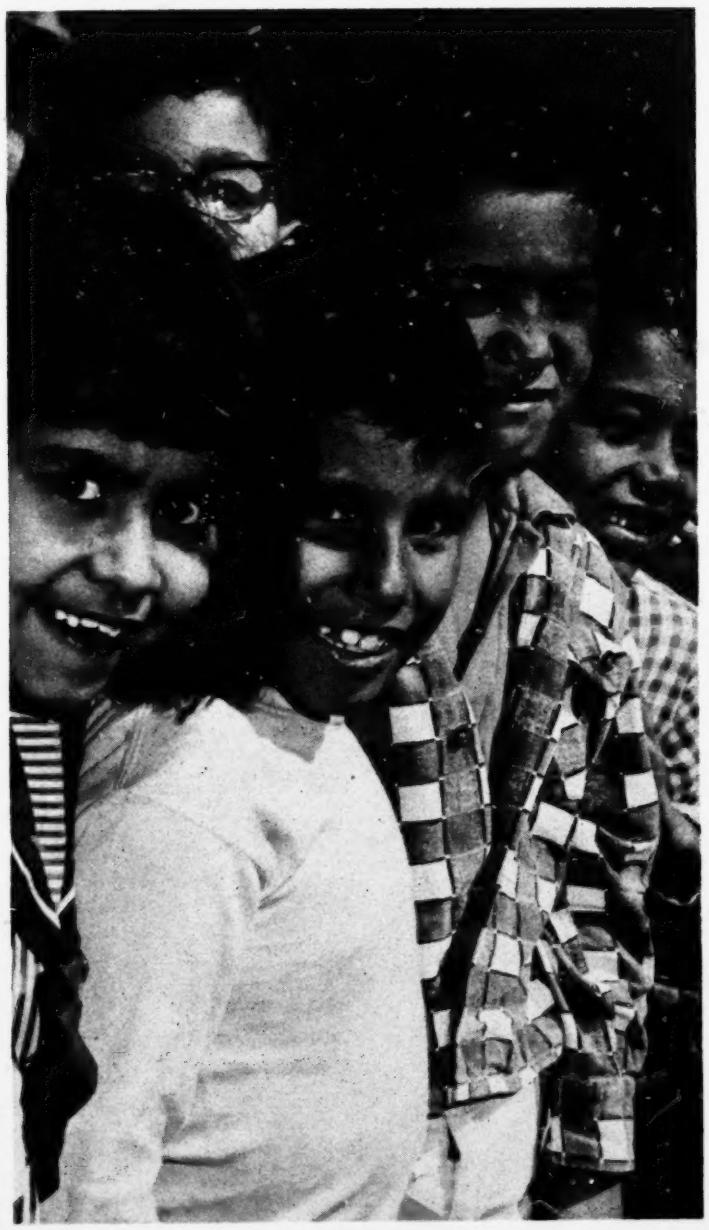

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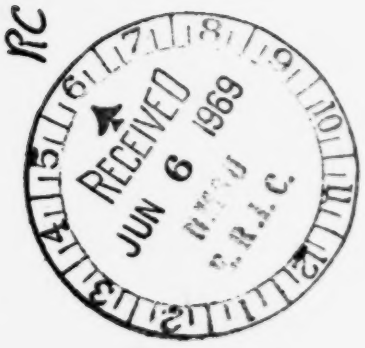

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GUIDANCE NEEDS OF MEXICAN AMERICAN YOUTH

Proceedings of the First

Invitational Conference on Guidance

Needs of Mexican American Youth

November 10, 1967

Lubbock, Texas

Owen L. Caskey, Editor

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FOREWORD

The School of Education at Texas Technological College, in cooperation with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory of Austin, Texas, held the First Invitational Conference on Guidance Needs of Mexican American Youth on the Texas Tech campus in November, 1967. This conference, one of a series of events leading up to the inauguration of the Mexican American Counselor Education Program in the Summer of 1968, was designed both to provide information from key speakers and to promote informal contact, discussion, and interaction. The more formal part of the program is reproduced here. The less structured, and equally valuable, parts are not subject to such encapsulation.

The intent of the conference was to establish a framework for providing guidance services for Mexican American students, not one of outlining answers or badgering public school personnel for past shortcomings. The 60 invited participants, representing more than 20 school districts in Texas and New Mexico, included about one-third counselors, one-third principals, and the remaining one-third distributed among school social workers, school nurses, and other auxiliary school service personnel. A subsequent evaluation revealed that 88.7 percent of the participants had found it "very interesting" and 84.9 percent found it "quite useful." Equally indicative was the finding that 75.5 percent recommended the conference be repeated for other personnel workers in their schools, and 73.6 percent suggested the same group meet again to explore the topics covered in a more detailed way.

Individuals intimately acquainted with national activities in all areas of Mexican American affairs have reported that this may well have

been the first such conference to deal exclusively with guidance for Mexican American youth.

The papers included here must be viewed as a whole, not as separate entities. The search is for direction and understanding, not answers or rules.

The contents might be divided into three parts. First, an introduction which seeks to set the stage for the scholarly and informative reports which follow. Second, two major reports of the educational and social factors which influence the Mexican American child. Third, a series of three shorter reports which were part of a symposium dealing with special problems and approaches in working with Mexican American students.

The keynote speaker and principal consultant for the Conference was Dr. Frank Angel, Professor of Education and Assistant Dean, School of Education, University of New Mexico. Dr. Angel has devoted the majority of his professional life to the education of the Mexican American. He served in the original and historic Nambe Experimental Community School Project in the 1930's and as the architect of the bilingual programs in New Mexico while with the New Mexico State Department of Education. He joined the faculty of the University of New Mexico in 1955.

Dr. Winfred Steglich serves as Chairman of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Texas Technological College. Due to his extensive research and experience in both rural and urban sociology of minority groups as well as his active involvement in community action programs, he reports

with authenticity the sociological factors important in meeting the guidance needs of Mexican American students.

Mr. W. N. Kirby, Director, Programs and Staff Development, Division of Compensatory Education, Texas Education Agency, is primarily concerned with directing staff training functions for local school districts in Title I, Elementary and Secondary Education Act programs for educationally disadvantaged children. Since much of his activity is with preschool programs, he was given the task of surveying the unique needs of Mexican American preschool children.

Dr. Doris Webb is an elementary school counselor for the Lubbock Independent School District and is assigned to neighborhoods with high Mexican American populations. Her publications and research reflect her interest and practical approach to the problems of schools and children. Her warm acceptance by the children and her ability to deal with both learning and personal problems of Mexican American children will be reflected in her brief comments about counseling the Mexican American elementary school child.

Mrs. Mary Martinez typifies the school social worker who embraces concern for children, ability to work with parents, and skills to aid teachers and administrators to see the environmental influences on a child and his behavior. In her comments she shares the insights and suggestions which counselors need in order to better serve Mexican American children, their parents, and the community.

We would like to acknowledge our gratitude to the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory for sponsoring the feasibility study at Texas

Technological College for a Teacher - Counselor Education Program and for the publication of these preceedings.

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GUIDANCE NEEDS OF MEXICAN AMERICAN YOUTH - AN INTRODUCTION

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GUIDANCE NEEDS OF MEXICAN AMERICAN YOUTH - AN INTRODUCTION

To perceive the guidance needs of any group of young people, one must first recognize the basic needs of all children, possess insight into the factors which influence maturational processes, and have some talent for implementing ways to understand motivations and subsequent achievement of goals.

The child is first a physiological organism with biological mechanisms and equipment. Yet, he is also a psychological entity following psychological laws in his thinking, feeling, interpreting, and behaving. Further, he is, perhaps more than anything, a social being who wants to belong and feel secure within the social atmosphere of group life. To fulfill his guidance needs, or any other for that matter, he must have a chance to function adequately on all three of these levels.

A counselor's understanding of developmental sequence must include knowledge of the stimulations and frustrations to which a child has been exposed and the responses he has made to these conditions -- be they biological, psychological, or social. It is generally agreed that the child is not simply a reactive mechanism, but an active participant in the solution of conflicts which develop in his environment and within himself. Behavior and development are effected by the inner and outer environment and by one's perception and evaluation of them as well. Long before he reaches school age, the child has attitudes, experiences, interpretations, and has drawn conclusions which serve as the basis for his actions.

This somewhat oversimplified view of behavior and perception is always tinged with values, social desirability, and appraisal of his action by

others. Discouragement, resentment, and feelings of frustration result, not only from external conditions, but also from an individual's appraisal of his own ability to meet them. The equipment which the culture, society, home, family, school, and other important influences provide the individual to do battle with these conditions may vary drastically from group to group and from individual to individual.

To be accepted by others, to participate as a member of the group, and to find a place of security in home, school, and society is of basic importance to the individual. Not to have such a place is one of the most painful experiences for any child that one could imagine. The obvious consequence is that he interprets his experiences as inferior to others. Almost any hardship, tragedy, pain, or inconvenience is relatively tolerable as long as it does not imply a lowering of social status. Inferiority, or the evaluation of one's social status as being inferior, prevents a feeling of belonging, defeats a willingness to participate, negates a desire to contribute, and results in withdrawal from difficult situations that are encountered.

The child from a culturally different home, especially one with a language handicap, does not require many encounters with those outside his immediate home and social group to experience discouragement and defeat. Humiliation and disgrace, inferiority and deficiency are the ultimate dangers and likely to be the potential result. The Anglo culture appears to be based on moral standards and ethical values which contribute to such a downfall if one does not succeed or excel.

The school has a tendency to emphasize the rewards for the successful student. The emphasis on success focuses attention on the successful child,

of whom we are proud, while for many others the feeling of inadequacy comes very easily in school. The Mexican American child with a language handicap and a different cultural background has very little chance under the rules of this game. Reared in a subculture whose socializing influences including family relationships, child rearing practices, language, behavior norms, values, and outlook are not directed toward Anglo middle-class cultural patterns, the differences between his experiences and the larger society are extreme. If the Mexican American child is viewed as disadvantaged, he is most disadvantaged in the school where middle-class values and behavioral patterns are commonly required for success and acceptance. In addition to the serious consequences of cultural and language complications, Mexican American youth continue to be influenced by the cumulative effects of sparse experience backgrounds, low economic situations, and delimiting home conditions. These factors serve as formidable barriers to successful educational achievement and subsequent economic attainment.

Although Spanish and Mexican cultures once dominated in the Southwest, in recent years they represent a socially, economically, and educationally disadvantaged subculture. During more than 350 years of residence, including more than 100 years of organized educational programs, the Mexican American in the Southwest is, today, at his greatest disadvantage in competing for educational opportunity, occupational activity, and material possessions.

The Mexican American in Texas provides a most graphic example of a group who experience low socioeconomic and educational status. They have high illiteracy rates and are more likely to be unemployed. The one and one-half million Mexican American citizens of Texas, not including more

than 200,000 registered alien Mexican nationals, have unemployment rates almost double that of the state as a whole (8.3 percent as compared to 4.2 percent). The educational achievement is low (6.3 years of school as compared to 10.4 years for the state), and a Lubbock County survey a few years ago placed the median grade level of Mexican Americans in the county at only 3.1 years. U. S. census figures indicate that 11 percent of the Mexican Americans in the five Southwestern states have not completed any school year, as compared with only about three percent for the region as a whole. A 1964 survey revealed that 38 percent of the Mexican American population in Texas had less than a fifth grade education.

The family median income also falls below other groups, being less than one-third of the annual income of Anglo families ($1,536 as compared to $5,239) and just over one-half of the $2,591 annual income of Negro families. The annual rate of population growth is reported to be 37 percent for Mexican Americans as compared to 22 percent for the state as a whole, and it is predicted that by the year 2000, the Mexican American population in Texas will be approximately 22 percent of the total, or an increase of more than seven percent from its current level of 15 percent.

To this cultural and educational difficulty must be added other complexities of the migratory worker's problems. The compounding of the problem results from more than 130,000 migratory workers in Texas, of which more than 90,000 leave the state each year to follow agricultural harvest north and west on a seasonal basis. Many return at the end of a harvest season and their numbers are bolstered by more than 20,000 annual legal immigrations of Mexican nationals. While there is less migration of workers than in past years, it remains a problem for many local schools. Neither does

the individual child involved see his own difficulties lessened as a result of statistical conclusions. With a renewed emphasis on the education of the migrant child at both the federal and state level, more rather than fewer programs devoted to his personal and curricular needs are expected.

Historically, education has been the means whereby subgroups have improved their conditions and opportunities in this country. The Mexican American in the United States, and particularly in the Southwest, is no exception. While it would be in error to assume that all Mexican American students experience difficulty and that little progress has been made in removing educational deficiencies for them, the truth is that the Mexican American remains low in educational achievement. Despite efforts from many fronts, he remains, as a cultural subgroup with the additional burden of language handicap, less able to profit from public school programs when he enters and becomes progressively less able to compete as he progresses through its lockstep organization.

These things are true, despite the fact that never have there been better prepared teachers, more selection of methodology, techniques and materials, greater curricular variety, or more extensive remedial programs. Never have the directions education must take in aiding the growth and development of all children been more clear. Seldom has there been such an array of programs and services designed to overcome both the social and educational lag of any given group of students. Yet the Mexican American remains low in achievement on all fronts which are considered important by the Anglo norms of society. The conclusion must be reached that Mexican Americans as individuals and groups are participating more than ever before in programs of the public schools. If such is the case, why have there

been no commensurate advances in his achievement, adjustment, and goal seeking? The answer does not lie in the simple conclusion that it is too early to expect such advances, nor by taking refuge in the obvious observation that the problem is too complex for simple solutions. Remember that some of the programs specifically designed for Mexican American children were originated in the 1930's, and that prohibiting the speaking of Spanish by children in school was a simple solution - albeit one that didn't succeed.

At this point new directions must be charted and new approaches pursued. These must take the form of preparation of new specialists who have different preparation and points of view. It must involve revised involvements of school staff with different points of departure. It must reach renewed conclusions based on different objectives. The school must, in short, help in ways that it has not helped before and reorient past programs toward more meaningful objectives. This demands new programs, new philosophies, and new efforts.

This is not to say that there has been little interest or few efforts. In fact there have been many who are interested. Witness the amount of literature over the years related to the learning and behavior of the bilingual child. There have been significant advances. Observe the special programs which have been tried and found successful in working with bilingual children. There have been many scholarly and helpful studies. Read the research results relating to linguistics, social structure and learning problems of the bilingual. As a result of these things and more, there most certainly has been an increase in program effectiveness and in understanding of the Mexican American child.

It is not enough, however. One should not belittle; to the contrary, one must laud the contribution of study and experimentation in the psycho-socio-vocal phenomenon of the Mexican American. What is now proposed in the preparation of a professional person to work in a counseling relationship specifically with Mexican American youth could not have been contemplated, much less accomplished, without this all-important background of research and study. It is time now to move beyond the scholarly and academic concerns to the personal involvement programs which will make contributions to the growth and development of individual Mexican American children.

The well designed programs, the curricular innovations, the method and material advances, as well as the projects which have brought the Mexican American student closer to the school and the learning process, are of little value if he does not remain in school or if he fails to find appropriate content and concerned people. Bringing Mexican American children to school and providing better prepared teachers, as important as this may be, is only a beginning. Utilizing better adapted curricula, while obviously an improvement, is simply not enough. We must face the real possibility that the problem of Mexican American education may not be essentially a bilingual program, per se, but rather one of role acceptance, identification, self-concept and social values. If this be true, it is neither the better training of bilingual teachers that becomes important, nor the sole emphasis on English as a second language as a curricular innovation, but rather the guidance function of those within the school who can help the child, and in fact, the entire Mexican American community.

The school, administrator, teacher, parent, and the community all must be focused toward meeting the needs of these children if real progress and

personal growth is to be made. The essence of program planning at this point is that one major way to aid Mexican American students is through the preparation of counselors for schools which have high percentages of Mexican American students in Mexican American community settings. This counselor, if he or she is to be effective, cannot be the stereotyped counselor of the past. New roles, new identifications, which mean new experiences and new programs must be developed. In this area, there are no patterns to follow; there are no success stories to emulate; there are no well-defined guidelines. Yet the job is important enough to find ways to prepare those who can perform it effectively.

The counselor must be prepared to serve, first, as a consultant to teachers, administrators, and parents, for both the individual and groups of children. Second, as a counselor for students, to aid them in moving toward their maximum potential through self-understanding and the establishment of appropriate goals. And third, as a community service agent through assuming liaison responsibilities between the school and the parents in matters that affect the adjustment and learning of Mexican American youth.

It is not only the legacy of poverty, but also the presence of failure and futility that crowd out the promise for the Mexican American child. The child from this segment of society does not require many encounters with those outside his immediate home and social group to experience discouragement and defeat. Before many years of school have passed, he is quite likely to give up winning the battle of school or of even solving his own problems. Quickly, whatever little confidence he may have had in his own ability, his society, and even his own future are undermined. It is to break this vicious, dismal cycle that the Mexican American Counselor Education model is proposed.

This model, influenced as it is by sociological, anthropological, and psychological concerns, is neither easy to describe nor outline. It includes the pervasive elements of these and other disciplines, all coming together in the sensitivity and perception of the counselor as a person. There are neither prescriptions nor rules which will determine the efforts or activities which will be predetermined for counselor action in any situation or for any given child. Rather the development of understanding and concern added to professional skills, will give one a sense of the necessary as well as direction toward meaningful and desirable ends. At this point involvement in field experiences is more relevant than course content, observation of behavior more tangible than textbook dogma, and first hand experience more vital than vicarious case studies.

In this instance, to search is to find. Counselors for Mexican American youth must search if they are to find ways to be of help to those who need their skills. The objective is to structure experiences, to aid in the search, and to reconstruct the observations into personally oriented concerns. The action, be it technique or material, will more likely be appropriate thereby. The goal is to be of help to those who find this professional journey important and imperative.

THE EDUCATION OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN IN THE SOUTHWEST

Excerpts from a Speech by
Frank Angel
Professor of Education
University of New Mexico, Albuquerque

THE EDUCATION OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN IN THE SOUTHWEST

What a strange commentary that teachers of teachers, presumably in the business of preparing personnel to teach and work with the schools of the state, should not have thought about, or been willing to develop, programs for people who would spend their professional lives working with Mexican American youth.

The situation is also true of other population groups attending our schools --- Negroes, economically deprived Anglo children, and Indians. Teacher preparation curricula primarily has been for the preparation of personnel for teaching and working with Anglo, middle-class children in urban areas. The economically deprived rural and urban Anglo children have been educationally neglected to almost as great an extent as the minority groups. Criticism of teacher preparation curricula can also be made of the curricula of the elementary schools and the high schools. Many teachers and guidance personnel do not know how to work with other than Anglo, middle-class students. Horacio Ulibarri found in his study that even Spanish-speaking teachers, who themselves emerged from lower social classes, have forgotten the needs and learning problems of Spanish-speaking children.[1]

Basic Information on Mexican Americans

Mexican Americans constitute a large segment of the population of the Southwestern part of the United States. While increasing in numbers, they have become relatively smaller in population percentage, as large numbers of non-Mexican Americans migrate into the Southwest. Mexican Americans are traditionally and historically a rural people. However, the last two decades

have seen a steady migration into urban centers although there are still large numbers in rural areas. For the most part, they are members of the lower socioeconomic classes, although there is a growing middle-class which has significantly increased in the last two decades. The accomodational pattern with the dominant group, the Anglo, is generally one of subordination, although the degree of subordination varies among the states and regions of the Southwest as well as within the states.

The Mexican American shares with a large portion of the non-Mexican American population, lower class status. However, he is unlike Anglo, lower-class persons because he has a different culture -- a point of considerable importance in education, and one which has not been sufficiently acknowledged or appreciated except in a most superficial manner.

History of the Education of Mexican Americans

There are some prominent names associated with efforts dealing with the education of Mexican Americans: Meriam in California; Loyd Tireman,[2] Marie Hughes, and Mary Watson, in New Mexico; Manuel in Texas; Lyle Saunders[3] in New Mexico and Colorado; Julian Zamora in Colorado; Florence Kluckhohn[4] in New Mexico; and E. K. Francis in New Mexico. Many others are in state departments of education and universities. Even work done by the Bureau of Indian Affairs is related.

Concerned primarily with the school behavior of Mexican American children, most of these people have focused on language development. Quite early, these investigators found that Mexican American pupils, when compared with Anglo, middle-class students, were considerably retarded in school

achievement as measured by standardized tests. The differences ranged from one to four grades below norms. The situation still exists.

In mental ability, the same situation was found. A tremendous debate on mental measurement began back in the 30's with George Sanchez[5] making the first attacks. It is still going on. Evidence of repeating grades and dropouts show that Mexican American children have the higher incidence when compared with Anglo, middle-class school populations.

Most of the early studies were concerned with only school performance. Much later, primarily after World War II, such concerns as self-concept, cultural difference, marginality, and affective behavior in general emerged.

The interesting thing about these early studies was the conclusion the investigators reached. Almost unanimously, they thought the problem centered on the inability of the children to speak English with the facility of the native English speaker. The middle-class variable was not identified until later. As a result, the remedy was to teach English to the children when they first came to school. Throughout California, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado, courses of study for teaching English were developed.

In spite of this, the results in the schools were not too promising. With the development of interest in the "linguistic approaches" to teaching second languages after World War II, a resurgence of English-as-a-second-language teaching has occurred. Supported by the federal government, new teaching materials and NDEA institutes have proliferated. Interesting variations, problems, and opinions have developed.

In evaluating the English-as-a-second-language approach to the education of Mexican American youth, one must take into consideration new knowledge about cognitive development and affective development. Such considerations will place language teaching in context and perspective and show that as a sole factor it cannot be the total answer.

Consult the work of Piaget, Hilda Taba,[6] Bruner, or any other cognitive psychologist. Studies on so-called "imprint factors" point out the effect of home conditioning on cognitive development and are of tremendous importance to guidance people.[7,8]

Lack of detailed knowledge concerning curriculum problems has been a real detriment to the effectiveness of school guidance personnel. Now guidance preparation programs should be concerned with it.

A widely recognized fact is that the current school curriculum is primarily for developing middle-class behaviors. Teachers, administrators, and school board members are usually middle-class oriented as well. Alison Davis, the noted Negro sociologist from the University of Chicago, has led the attack on testing by showing how standardized tests have discriminated against the lower-class students. He has also called attention to the discriminating content of textbooks.

Southwest educators' reactions to the curriculum has been one of "adjusting" the middle-class curriculum. Adjusting has meant providing easier courses of the same subject, requiring fewer solid subjects, grouping in the elementary school, promoting for social reasons, and dumping as many as possible of the academically retarded into vocational education.

The middle-class curriculum has caused many of the problems confronted by school guidance personnel. The solution has been to help the students adjust to it. If the curriculum is a plan to bring about desired behaviors in students, then there is no reason why the plan should not be substantively changed. Guidance personnel ordinarily have little training in curriculum development. Perhaps this is why they have interpreted their job as that of helping the student adjust to the middle-class curriculum. Obviously, all school personnel must be involved, not only guidance personnel.

The curriculum problem brings to focus one of the most complex questions in the education of culturally different groups, including the Mexican American; that is, whether we should allow the Mexican American to retain his own culture.

Cultural Pluralism or Cultural Standardization

The behavioral sciences have emphasized culture and its pervading influence on behavior. Walter Lippmann's famous aphorism; "First we look, then we name, and only then do we see," is appropriate for understanding cultural behavior. Bredemeier and Stephenson have pointed out that individuals do not respond directly to stimuli, but rather to cultural definitions of the stimuli.[9]

The Mexican American is born into and grows up in his own cultural medium. What he becomes, how his personality is formed, how he is conditioned (both cognitively and affectively, in short, his total behavior) can be better understood in terms of his culture. To a non-Mexican American the behavior of the Mexican American is puzzling. At times the non-Mexican reacts with prejudice at behaviors that are different from his own. Inci-

dentally, this reaction is rather universal, that is, most persons are ethnocentric about their own culture and prejudiced against other cultures.

Parenthetically, one cannot fully comprehend a culture different from one's own by studying about it. He must live it -- a point to consider in teacher and counselor training programs. An interesting and important aside on this matter is that comprehension of one's own culture in an objective manner is very difficult to achieve because so much of it is unconscious. Simply because a person is a Mexican American does not automatically mean that he comprehends his own culture -- that is to say, his own behavior. Sensitivity training for this task is now being developed.

When the Mexican American child comes to school with his own culturally conditioned behavior, he runs smack into a different culture. The schools have said to him, "Forget your own culture; you must learn Anglo middle-class culture (behavior)." Some teachers do this sympathetically; others do not. The psychological costs to the Mexican American child can only be imagined. Additional studies such as The Children of Sanchez by Oscar Lewis are needed.[10] This merging process produces damaged self-concepts, emotional conflict that is life long, dropouts, retarded learners, etc.

Now the problem: Should the school . . should American society . . . allow the Mexican American to keep his own culture; or should he be made into the cultural image of the Anglo middle-class? We cannot avoid this problem if this analysis makes any sense to all.

Guidance personnel cannot decide one way and teachers, administrators, boards of education, and parents another. Not only will opposing decisions

lead to conflict between guidance personnel and the others, but also the students will be caught psychologically in the conflict.

This can't be escaped with Rogerian therapeutic approaches or, "Let the individual decide." He hasn't any choice.

The early fixation with lack of facility for English, channeled the attention of educators so much that it became almost the sole factor to be given systematic study in the education of Mexican American students. The implications of cultural differences on both cognitive and affective behavior have been largely ignored. They are just now beginning to come to focus. The matter of intergroup relations between the Anglo and Mexican American has also been given too little attention in the schools.

Pervading Influence of Middle-Class Values

In most schools, guidance programs center around the counselor giving his attention to student behavior problems. Other roles assigned to guidance personnel include testing and its interpretation, some vocational guidance, program advisement with individual students, and at times, attendance. In short, the guidance program revolves around the school's curriculum, the teacher's concepts of the role of the counselor, and the organization of the school.

Guidance personnel are no more exempt from a middle-class orientation than are teachers. Quite often the etiology of behavior is too narrowly conceived. Florence Kluckhohn's work in Boston illustrates this point.

She and a group of psychiatrists and some clinical psychologists were working with guidance people in the Boston schools where there are large numbers of Italian American students, usually of the lower social class. They found that teachers typically referred students to the counselors when they misbehaved or were unable to do the academic work satisfactorily.

Bobby Rosillini was one such child. He was exhibiting all kinds of misbehavior in the classroom. The teachers couldn't motivate him. He was disrupting the whole class. He had been sent to the counselor so many times they knew each other well, but Bobby continued to be a problem. Dr. Kluckhohn and the behavioral team started working in the home. The family was a large one. The father was an autocratic Italian who had come from Italy in his youth. The mother had absorbed enough American culture to stand up against her husband to the point where they were no longer speaking to each other. They used the children to communicate with each other. The clinical team soon found that the hostility of the mother and father to each other was being transferred to and internalized by the children — particularly the oldest, Bobby, who had been made a scapegoat by the parents. When Bobby was removed, the next child in line began to exhibit the same behavior that Bobby had. Dr. Kluckhohn and her colleagues had a difficult time convincing the father that his behavior was the cause of all the turmoil. The father was behaving in a culturally-correct way for Italy. Bobby had internalized conflict for so long it had become part of his behavior.

Dr. Kluckhohn, in generalizing, said that case after case of school misbehavior was traceable to problems in the family, either with parents, or peers. The guidance personnel in the school treated behavior as if it were school caused.

Broadening the Etiology of Behavior Causation

The main point of this case is the failure of guidance personnel and of school people in general to comprehend that behavior has roots outside the school, particularly in primary relationships in the family, the peer group, and the community.

How are guidance personnel and teachers going to learn the dynamics of each individual's non-school life? School social workers have been made available for this job, but they have not been too successful in transmitting the information they have gained to teachers and guidance personnel. Part of the difficulty lies in the behavioral dynamics involved. Much of the significant influence of parents, brothers and sisters, the gang, is too subtle and fleeting to be caught by ordinary visits to the home. Bell and Vogel's book on The Family, particularly the chapters on personality development, is a good source.[11]

Training programs should perhaps include a course and a guided internship in family dynamics with Mexican American families.

School behavior is like an iceberg, seven-eighths of it is hidden from the eye.

Of especial interest, in addition to the affective conditioning that occurs with out-of-school primary groups, is the matter of cognitive conditioning. Cognitive conditioning refers to what is learned and the style or mode of thinking that is learned. Much of what is ascribed to limited experiential background or low mental capacity is due to cultural conditioning regarding ways of thinking. Deutsch has been doing quite a bit of work in this area and so have Bruner and Hilda Taba.

Lowering the Psychological Costs

Since the emphasis has been almost exclusively on the learning of English, the emotional development of the Mexican American student as he learns Anglo middle-class culture has been neglected. Some guidance people have stated that the needs of Mexican American students are no different from those of Anglo students. This judgment ignores the whole question of cultural differences.

Guidance students at the University of New Mexico have done some projective testing and analysis with both Indian and Spanish-speaking students. They have unearthed tremendous amounts of conflict within the students which are not readily apparent. They found in case after case tremendous psychological damage done unwittingly by well-meaning teachers.

The question is, (given the fact that the Mexican American is going to be forced, cajoled, persuaded, or guided into a new cultural behavior) can we lower, or limit, or control the amount and kind of damage to him as an individual? One of the more significant findings of a study by Segel and Ruble, conducted in a junior high school in Albuquerque, was the damaged concept of self with which the students emerged.[12]

Education in Intergroup Relations

Some roots of this problem are in the community. The rejection of the Mexican American on an equal status with the Anglo, exhibited through prejudice, discrimination, slums, and lower class status by the dominant group, has all kinds of implications for the education of the Mexican American. The problem of prejudice and discrimination is a two-way street, as L. K. Francis has pointed out. This is why programs that focus on the pre-

judice of the dominant group toward the subordinate group so often meet with partial success. The Mexican American is also ethnocentric about his own culture as the term "La Raza" demonstrates.

But it is certain that unless the walls of prejudice by the Anglo community are lowered, the psychological damage will continue. The school may be able to control overt exhibitions of discrimination, but it cannot control the whole community. When the students leave the school, they will encounter discrimination.

Obviously, programs in intergroup relations both within and outside of the school are needed. How much of this responsibility belongs to the guidance personnel? They do reap the results of failure to do something about it as professional people in the schools.

Vocational Guidance-Placement

Finally, a word about vocational guidance programs. The best programs often fail at the last and most crucial step -- that of job placement. For large numbers of non-college bound Mexican Americans during and upon termination of high school, the world suddenly collapses because they can find no jobs. The whole matter of vocational and technical education needs to be looked at more closely. The opening of technical-vocational schools outside the high schools seems to be testimony that the schools have not been able to meet the needs of lower-class youth.

Summary

The education of the Mexican American has been characterized by a non-recognition of cultural differences (except for language) of the problems of

transculturation and intergroup relations. School programs have been conceived in terms of curricula (designed for Anglo middle-class pupils) which have been "adjusted" for the Mexican American in rather superficial ways. Concern with the Mexican American's education must involve a systems approach within the school in which context guidance programs will find a functional role. Such concern should involve out-of-school factors in the family and in the community. The implications of these factors for guidance preparation programs is far reaching and should highlight the inadequacies of many of the present programs as well as point out considerations for more realistic future ones.

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SOCIOCULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDENT IN THE SOUTHWEST

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SOCIOCULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDENT IN THE SOUTHWEST

Unfortunately, the "sociocultural characteristics of the Mexican American student in the Southwest" cannot be discussed directly since there is a lack of evidence. That is, there isn't enough information on students, or pupils, at any level or all levels to remain narrowly on the topic, nor is such information likely to be available in the immediate future. Since Mexican Americans are not identifiable on such public records as birth and death registrations, hard information of a demographic sort simply isn't available. Only that which appears in the special census reports on people with Spanish surnames, or information from surveys in various communities, provides the basis for knowledge about this large and important group. In short, my discussion of the sociocultural characteristics of Mexican American students must be, more accurately, a discussion of the sociocultural characteristics of Mexican Americans in general; applications to students will have to be made on the basis of inference rather than on the basis of data.

To begin, a few general comments to put the topic into perspective. First, Mexican Americans are the third largest minority group in the United States, only Negroes and Jews being more numerous. Second, they are among the fastest growing group, with only American Indians increasing at a more rapid rate--and their more rapid increase is really doubtful. Third, they are among the oldest of America's minority groups, antedating the Negro by several decades, at the same time that their numbers are still being added to daily by in-migration from Mexico. Fourth, they are highly concentrated in the Southwestern states, and in certain parts of those states. Most

American minority groups are unequally distributed throughout the several states, but this is strikingly the case with the Mexican Americans so that it is not uncommon for some communities to be 70 or 80 percent Mexican American. Fifth, they are a much more heterogeneous group than most people realize. Indeed, some segments of the group resent the very label "Mexican American" for they have no real identification with Mexico. Sixth, they are among the least assimilated of minority groups which, in turn, means that they are among the least educated, the poorest, and the most deprived groups in American society. And unless they use education more effectively in the future than they have in the past, they will remain unduly long in the category of the unassimilated and deprived in our generally affluent society. Finally--and this is particularly pertinent in a discussion concerned with education--they are a very young population with a strikingly disproportionate number of children of school and pre-school aged children Specifically, the median age in 1960 was 19.6 years. Or, to put it another way, 24 percent of the population under five years of age in Texas are Mexican Americans, but Mexican Americans make up only 15 percent of the total Texas population. To put it still another way, approximately 25 percent of Mexican American households in Texas in 1960 had seven or more members while less than 4 percent of Anglo American households were this large.

Social scientists distinguish between culture and society, though both concepts are based on the observation of the same human behavior and both attempt to provide ways of looking at that behavior. By culture, we generally mean the norms and values by which life in the group is shaped; and by society, or social structure, we generally mean the patterned interaction in the group as it routinely takes place. In other words, when one

speaks of the culture of the group, he is concerned with the ways of the folk and the ideas and values which make sense out of those ways. When he speaks of the social structure of the group, he refers to the patterning of roles and statuses, of expected behaviors, in the basic institutions of the group. The patterned behaviors express the underlying norms and values, and in that sense these are terms which deal with the same subject matter. But it is one thing to say that the culture requires males to give evidence of their virility and another thing to say that men, as they play their family or church or palomilla roles, act like men. My comments in what follows will deal first with the cultural characteristics and then with the patterned institutional behaviors.

A. Cultural themes. What are the major, or focal, values and themes of Mexican American life which are not shared by Anglo Americans and which give shape to the day-to-day life of the members of the group? These can be discussed under five headings: (1) loyalty to the family, (2) machismo, or virility, (3) the relative importance of personal qualities and achievements, (4) lack of goal orientation, and (5) a time orientation to the present rather than the future. The counselor who works with Mexican American children, at whatever age level, will, I believe, be able to apply illustrations from his counseling experiences to each of these points as I discuss them briefly.

(1) Loyalty to the family. Among the cultural themes of Mexican American society which must rank near the top in the hierarchy of themes is the importance of loyalty to the family, especially to the members of the nuclear family (parents and dependent

children), but also to all members of the family, including extensions based on kinship (grandparents) and extensions of a ritual kind (compadres). As Madsen puts it, "The upper-class rancher and the lowly crop picker both think of themselves first as family members and secondly as individuals." (Madsen, p. 44.) The composition of the family as well as the role complexes which comprise it will be discussed under the next heading, social structure; however, the expectation that family members are loyal to the unit and devoted to each other, and that, in the process, they show respect for their elders, is a basic cultural norm of the Mexican American society. Rubel's comment on this cultural theme summarizes the matter well: "In chicano society the nuclear family stands forth clearly and distinctly. The loyalties of chicanos are home-centered...Social life at home is marked by clearly defined patterns of deference. A father represents stern but, ideally, just authority...The mother represents the nurturant aspects of family life. Early in life the children commence to learn their sex-typed roles." (Rubel, p. 213.) In short, family life is central in Mexican American society, and loyalty of family members to it is a basic expectation of all members of the society. Also, the notion that the old are to be deferred to by the young, and men by women, is a clear-cut expectation. As Rubel puts it, quoting a young housewife in Mexiquito: "In La Raza, the older order the younger, and the men the women." (Rubel, p. 59.)

(2) Machismo. A second major theme of Mexican American culture is the notion that men are highly virile (machismo) while women are pure and chaste. To some observers of Mexican life (see especially the recent books by Oscar Lewis), this would seem to be the organizing principle of Mexican culture. It would seem to go without saying that this cultural theme builds stresses and strains into the relationships between the sexes; for obviously not all men can demonstrate their virility while not all women are pure and chaste.

Perhaps the best summary discussion of this widely discussed theme in Mexican American life is Madsen's:

> "The young husband must show his male acquaintances that he has more sexual energy than his wife can accommodate. To prove his prowess, he often continues the sexual hunt of his premarital days. He may demonstrate his physical and financial resources by visiting Boy's Town with his drinking companions after an evening in a tavern. The most convincing way of proving maschismo and financial ability is to keep a mistress in a second household known as a casa chica. Few men in the lower class can aspire to such luxury, which constitutes the height of manly success among middle and upper-class husbands." (Madsen, p. 49.)

Madsen goes on to point out that there are checks against a display of machismo which would lower the family's standard of living by too much profligacy in philandering on the husband's part, including loss of prestige in the community, the notion that an exaggerated dedication to sex is viewed as an indication of low intellectual ability, and the fear of mal de sangre (venereal disease).

The expectations with respect to the other side of the coin of sexuality, female purity, are as exaggerated as the machismo of the male; and the Mexican Americans have beliefs which serve to rationalize their extreme expectations in matters of sex. First, sexual promiscuity on the part of the women is a "heinous crime...No man would remain with a promiscuous wife unless he is already so debased that nothing matters." (Madsen, p. 49.) Also, it is believed that a women's purity is so fragile that "one sexual indiscretion inevitably leads to a life of complete sexual abondon." (Madsen, p. 49.) These exaggerated definitions of sex behavior color life at all ages, including those of preschool and school children. Unlike Anglo, middle-class children, Mexican American boys and girls may not play together as freely and innocently in the so-called "heterosexual stage of development" (roughly the primary school grades, or to ages 10 or 11 for girls and 12 or 13 for boys); for the norms of machismo and virginity are already involved in the relationship.

(3) Stress on Personal Qualities. A third major cultural theme of Mexican American society, and one which is significantly different from Anglo American culture, is the notion that honor, prestige, self-reliance, shame, and related concepts are defined in terms of personal qualities rather than in terms of achievements. Many authors comment on the invidiousness and anxiety which characterize relationships in Mexican American society, (Rubel, p. 214; Simmons, pp. 286ff.; and

Octavio Romano, pp. 966-967.) and they tend to concur that it relates to the stress on honor and esteem which is attached to what a person is rather than what he does. Anglos evaluate a person in terms of what he can do; Latins seem to evaluate rather in terms of what he is. If he is a male, then machismo enters into any evaluation of him. Madsen again describes this as well as anyone:

> "The concept of male honor requires the Latin to avoid being proven wrong. To take a stand on an issue and then retreat is regarded as degrading. Therefore, the Latin avoids openly stating an opinion unless he is ready to stand by it and defend it. When the Latin backs down from a stated opinion, he loses respect in the community ...
>
> "The manly Latin must repay an insult to himself or his family in order to defend the honor with which God endowed him. Revenge is usually achieved by direct physical attack, which may not be immediate but must be inevitable ...
>
> "Weakness is looked down on in all spheres of male activity. A man should be mentally and physically strong. Cripples are pitied but never regarded as manly unless their physical disability is compensated for by other strengths ..." (Madsen, p. 19.)

Such a highly personalized view of life is, of course, characteristic of "gemeinschaft" type societies, those in which the relationships between people are total (involving the whole person) rather than segmental (involving persons as role players, contact being limited to those parts of the persons which is exposed in playing the given roles). However, Mexican American stress on individual honor and esteem, and the need to defend it with conflict kinds of action in order to avoid excessive anxiety and stigmatization, seems to be excessive even for gemeinschaft-like societies. In sum, Anglo Americans' anxieties stem from failure to achieve goals;

Mexican Americans' anxieties seem to be rooted in concern about the shortcomings of the person as a person.

(4) Lack of goal orientation. Closely related to this cultural theme is a fourth one, namely a lack of goal orientation by comparison with Anglo American culture. Again, it is to be expected that in a gemeinschaft-like society, goal or task orientation would be minimal. However, this is a striking and perhaps exaggerated value. Things will be what they are without the instrumentality of his actions; que sera, sera. Again, passages from Madsen best illustrate this norm:

> "Instead of blaming himself for his error, he frequently attributes it to adverse circumstances. The Latin does not think he missed the bus because he arrived too late. He blames the bus for leaving before he arrived. It is believed that everybody is subject to temptation under certain circumstances. Many succumb due to human weakness, which is a universal rather than individual failing. Thus, Juan did not get drunk because he voluntarily drank too much. He got drunk because too much liquor was served at the party." (Madsen, p. 16.)

Or, competition for school achievement, which middle-class, Anglo Americans take for granted in their children, is shunned by Mexican American children.

> "...Mexican-American children especially dread being forced to recite in class. They know that their mistakes in English will be criticized in class and perhaps ridiculed after class by Anglo students. The push to excel and compete for grades violates the non-competitive values of La Raza. A Mexican-American student who conspicuously outshines his age-mates in academic endeavors is mocked or shunned ..." (Madsen, p. 107.)

Madsen goes on to point out, and cite cases in the process, that "a good many of the Mexican Americans who go on to college don't seem to know what they want out of an education ..."

and that this is particularly the case with Latins who are seeking a higher education than their parents received. (Madsen, p. 108.)

(5) Present orientation. A final cultural theme of the Mexican Americans which is sharply different from Anglo culture is a time orientation to the present, or immediate past, rather than to the future. Anglo Americans expect everyone at all ages to plan for the future, work for the future, and to defer gratifications in the present so that greater gratifications may be experienced at some later time. Most Anglo Americans find it both incomprehensible and annoying that Mexican Americans do not plan for, and defer gratifications for, the future, that they spend their wages as they get them (and on watermelons and beer, or candy and coke for the children, rather than on a home or an insurance policy).

Perhaps the most delightful presentation of "Mexican time" is by Lyle Saunders, (Saunders, pp. 117-120.) when he points out that, in the life of the Mexican villages from which this orientation to time derives, "the rhythms of life were seasonal rather than diurnal." The villager didn't need a watch - he didn't even need a calendar. The Anglo American, by contrast, has his entire life controlled (perhaps tyrannized is a better word) by split second time measurements. A television program begins at precisely 8 p.m., or an appointment with a business executive is for ten minutes beginning at exactly 8:45, and the plane to Dallas leaves at 7:03.

The Mexican American prefers to let other norms take precedence over punctuality. Visiting with a friend in the cantina may be more important than keeping an appointment with the potential employer; and he will defer until tomorrow that which can just as well be done tomorrow, doing today only that which must be done today (harvesting crops that are ready for harvest, for example). And what he does today he does because it must be done, not because work is good or because he is driven by a zeal to work. In short, the Calvinist ethic--as expressed in the hymn, "Work for the night is coming," for example--is not a part of Mexican American ethics. When the night comes, it comes, and the things of the night are then taken care of; but now it is day, and it is sufficient unto itself.

These are the values and norms which the Mexican American child internalizes in the process of being socialized in early childhood. They become for him the good and right guidelines for living and for adjusting to situations and to people. For him they are not only the best ways, but perhaps the only right ways of living. To the extent that they differ from the values and norms which Anglo Americans have internalized--and the focus in the discussion above has been on those values which are different from Anglo American values--the Mexican American will have difficulty in adjusting to Anglo Americans and their ways. To the extent that Anglo Americans, including school teachers, do not understand and appreciate the differences, relationships between the two will be difficult and

subject to strain. Also, since these basic Mexican American value orientations are learned in early childhood, long before the child is in a position to discriminate between that which fits and that which doesn't fit the situations in which he finds himself, they become the foundation of his entire value orientation. He cannot later on, by taking thought, get rid of his emotional attachment to and involvement in these life-ways even though he may learn Anglo ways later in life. The new Anglo ways will be a veneer on a basic Mexican American value foundation; in crisis situations, the basic value orientations might be expected to show through the veneer.

B. Social Structure. As pointed out earlier, the values and norms which make up the culture of a group are the basis of the established, recurring relationships between people in the group which make up its social structure. The concept "social structure" includes the following elements: (1) the roles which people are expected to play in their institutionalized groups (family, church, associations, etc.); (2) the relationships between role players in those groups (husband and wives, or parents and children, in the family, for example); and (3) the realtionships between members of the society in general. All three of these roles and relationships become patterned and routinized in the life of the group and its members. People's actions are shaped by the fact that they expect others as well as themselves to behave in these expected ways. To the extent that these patterned ways are acted out correctly in most

situations by all of the actors, the social structure tends to be conservative; that is, it tends to conserve the values and norms which make up the culture and give the group its identity as a group. These are the patterned roles and relationships of Mexican American society, the instruments through which Mexican American culture is conserved, which are discussed in that which follows.

(1) Family System. Family systems define the relationships between (1) spouses, (2) parents and children in the nuclear unit, (3) the members of the nuclear unit to other members in the extended family, (4) men and women in general, (5) and young and old by specifying the roles which are appropriate to each person in these relationships.

In all family systems, the nuclear unit of parents and dependent children is central; however, it may be the center of a system which includes elements totally foreign to an Anglo American understanding of family. Such is the case with the Mexican American family. It has at its center the nuclear unit, except that, as Madsen points out, "the bond between parents and children extends over three generations" (Madsen, p. 46.) rather than two. Also, unlike the Anglo family, "because the family name and affiliation are traced through the father, the paternal grandparents are generally of more importance than the mother's parents." (Madsen, p. 46.)

Whereas the contemporary Anglo American's recognition of kinship doesn't go beyond grandparents and, perhaps a few aunts, uncles, and cousins, in Mexican American families kinship is extended to include people who are not genetically (consanguineously) kin at all. This is accomplished through a ritual kinship known as compadrazgo (coparenthood). There are several kinds of compadres, but the most important ones are the baptismal godparents of one's children. But all compadres assume "carefully defined roles in relation to the other participants in a religious ceremony establishing ritual kinship." (Madsen, p. 47.)

It should not be assumed, however, that infinitely extended kinship, including ritual kinship, places unlimited obligations upon the Mexican American to all of his relatives. As Rubel points out: "Except for obligations toward elderly parents, married couples feel little economic responsibility beyond the nuclear family toward relatives simply because they are relatives. Rather, beyond the nuclear family, the outer world, including relatives, is viewed with great reserve ..." (Rubel, p. 217) In short, the basic biological, or nuclear, unit is the central unit of intimate interaction for Mexican Americans as it is for people in all societies; however, unlike the Anglo American family system, there are also extensions of the nuclear family which have significance for the Mexican American.

Relationships between men and women within the family, and in general, are defined in terms of the norms of machismo for men and purity and chastity for women. A wife and mother is, ideally, "submissive, unworldly, and chaste," (Rubel, p. 68) in contrast with the husband-father who is expected to be macho. Whereas boys in the family learn what it means to be a male, daughters are very tightly pulled into the home at the onset of puberty in order to protect their purity.

> "The teen-age daughter of a traditional family stays home and helps her mother with the housework after school and on weekends. Her most constant companions are her mother and her sisters. She is never allowed to be alone with a boy. Her girl friends are often relatives or family friends who visit each other's homes ... she prepares for her future role as a mother by helping to care for the younger children. In the event of her mother's sickness (she) is expected to take charge of all household tasks." (Madsen, p. 53.)

Males, on the contrary, are assumed to have sexual designs on all females who are not in statuses which require respectful behavior on the part of the male. Thus, visiting between households in a neighborhood may be threatening because, as Rubel points out, "if a male not included in a category of relationships in which respectful behavior is prescribed pays a visit to a home, he is presumed to have sexual designs on the women of that household." (Rubel, p. 84.) In a recent survey conducted by the writer in Lubbock, Texas, it was found that female Mexican American interviewers were much more successful in gaining rapport with Mexican American respondents of both sexes and all ages than were male Mexican Americans. Even though the male interviewers were members of the in-group, they were viewed with suspicion and distrust by the interviewees and their families.

Another major organizing principle of Mexican American family life is respect for elders of both sexes, with Mexican American children showing extraordinary respect for their parents and grandparents. However, as Rubel indicates, the respect for father rests on different bases from that given to mother. "The father must be respected because of his authoritative position at the head of the household, whereas the mother is respected because she minimizes her own necessities in order to better provide for those of her family. She devotes herself to her family, and the consistent idealized portrait one recieves of Mexican American mothers is that of a suffering (padeciendo) woman." (Rubel, p. 68.)

Both of these basic organizing principles of Mexican American family life are threatened by the acculturation of the younger members of the group to Anglo values and practices, much "to the disgust of the more conservative Latins." (Madsen, p. 53.) Restraints on the behavior of teen-age girls is relaxed, and the submissiveness of the wife is more and more reluctantly given as the Mexican American wife becomes increasingly Anglicized. Role conflict in the Anglicized family, mirrored in the confused children of such families, is the consequence.

(2) Extra-domestic Realtionships: The Palomilla. Mexican American girls and unmarried women are expected to confine their activities to the home. However, the men are not only permitted, but expected, to engage in social activities

beyond the confines of the household. "The most important of the institutional settings, other than the family, in which young males engage is the palomilla ... (which) is a network of informal dyadic relations between age-mates." (Rubel, p. 101.) The word means that the young men, like moths, cluster in groups around a light in the early evening. As both Rubel and Madsen emphasize, the palomilla is in no sense a formal group or association; it lacks formal organization and leadership, and the membership may be changing constantly as the dyadic relationships on which it rests change. The palomilla doesn't even compare to the urban gangs of Anglo American society, for these also have hierarchized statuses. Rubel also points out that Anglos are never members of palomillas and that the term is never used to refer to work groups of any kind. (Rubel, pp. 101-118; Madsen, p. 54.)

(3) Membership in Formal Associations vs. Informal Relationships. Most of the immigrant groups which have come to the United States to settle in her cities have formed their own ethnic associations in which their native language is spoken and their folkways acted out. They have been useful devices for the immigrant populations, serving both to maintain their ethnic identity and to adjust to the political and social world of the American city. However, the Mexican Americans, in spite of several generations of residence in the Southwest, have not organized such groups effectively; and many observers of the American scene wonder why. The answer does not seem to lie, as some observers have remarked, in "the individualistic

nature of Hispanic peoples, which vitiates against group action." (Martinez, p. 48.) Rather, the answer seems to lie in the fact that Mexican Americans moved from the folk culture of Mexican villages, a society in which voluntary associations are nonexistent because they are not needed, into America (and increasingly into urban America) in which they are the respected instrument of much public action. Other immigrant groups had experience with voluntary associations in the "old country," and forming their own groups upon arrival in the "new country" was natural for them; Mexican Americans had no such experience.

Why, then, did they not develop such associations as they became acculturated? The real answer to that is that, as a group, they have not really become acculturated. Furthermore, there are certain elements in their culture which militate against using formal associations as instruments of the group and put a premium on personalism in the relations of people. Perhaps Sheldon has best summarized the reasons for their failure to organize voluntary groups in the following two paragraphs.

> "It is not surprising that Mexican-Americans have been unable to put to effective use the tool of the mass voice to promote the common good of their group. They are in fact not a group; they do not speak with a common voice; they do not have mutual agreement; they are fragmented first by their heterogeneity and second by the tradition of individualism.
>
> "Other and perhaps more subtle factors militate against their forming effective coalitions or developing strong leaders; the tradition of first loyalty to the extended family; the pattern of the double standard and of clearly defined male-female roles; the rural folk

> distaste for individual advancement at the expense of one's peers; these and other traditional values in opposition to the mores of the Anglo-urban society place the Mexican-American at a disadvantage. They also create value conflicts in the upwardly mobile middle class." (Sheldon, pp. 127-128.)

Rubel, in discussing Mexican American political participation, also makes some pertinent observations. He points out that they are no less interested in politics and elections than Anglo Americans; "they simply organize their activities in a different fashion." (Rubel, p. 139.) In another discussion, Rubel explains the "different fashion" in which Mexican Americans participate, as follows: "Among Anglos, friendships derive from consociation in formal corporate groups, such as Lions Club, Rotary, Optimists ... and others too numerous to mention here. By contrast, chicanos incorporate formal groups on foundations of informal associations with acquaintances or palomillas." (Rubel, p. 139.) In other words, from the Mexican American's point of view, Anglos have "the cart before the horse" in respect to membership in formal associations; associations should spring from existing informal relationships rather than being instruments through which informal relationships are created and achieved.

There are, of course, all kinds of Mexican American organizations, and some of them have fairly large memberships. Most of them are post-World War II in origin, but some are older than that. Sheldon quotes a Mexican American newspaper in East Los Angeles to the effect that there are approximately 85 Mexican American organizations in East Los Angeles.

(Sheldon, pp. 137-138.) The Second World War and the Korean War had the effect of producing leaders among the Mexican Americans whose horizons were broadened by military experience and who were enabled to pursue higher education through the G. I. Bill. However, these "liberating" experiences also produced a measure of acculturation which may have removed some of them from their groups by reducing their Mexican American identity through acculturation and assimilation.

In summary, Mexican Americans participate in organized groups differently from Anglo Americans, viewing them as extensions of personal relationships rather than as instruments for achieving the goals of the group. Personalism in relationships between people take precedence over the interests of the group as group.

(4) Social Stratification and Upward Mobility. Another major factor which shapes the relationships between people in societies is the stratification system, especially the degree of rigidity which characterizes the stratification scheme. By "layering" the members of the society in strata which carry differential rewards and opportunities with them, the relationships between people within and between the layers is significantly affected. The rich and well-born differ from the less fortunate in life chances as well as in life style. As a consequence, the representatives of the different groups may have so little in common that, though they both

share in the same general culture, meaningful interaction between them is impossible.

Among the more than four million Mexican Americans, there are obviously differences of rank in some kind of stratification system. However, regional differences and variations are such that it is impossible to generalize about the entire population. Studies in Tucson and Pomona don't layer the population in the same way, and on the basis of the same criteria, as do studies in Mexiquito or Kansas City. What this means is that occupation, income, education, and the other customary indexes of stratification are defined differently in the several subsections of the country in which Mexican Americans are found. Furthermore, the degree of acculturation influences the extent to which the usual criteria are meaningful in distinguishing the layers which make up the socioeconomic status scheme among Mexican Americans.

Generally speaking, the five or six class stratification system which American scholars use in describing the typical American community seems to be a function of urban, industrial society in which upward mobility by means of individual achievement is characteristic. In folk, or pre-industrial, societies, however, two classes typically exist: the privileged and all the rest. (See Gideon Sjoberg, The Pre-Industrial City.) As the Mexican Americans increasingly become part of urban, industrial society--and this would seem to be more the

case in California and Arizona than in Texas--one might expect to find four or five levels of stratification; however, occupation, education, and income data suggest that this doesn't really correspond to an equivalent scheme in Anglo American society as some observers, especially Madsen, report. The biggest gap, especially in Texas communities, would seem to be between agricultural laborers and all others, as Rubel observes in his study of Mexiquito.

> "Those employed as agricultural field laborers do not interact with others not so occupied, nor do members of each of the occupational groups attend public dances in the plaza on the same evening. Observations of behavior in Mexiquito indicate that the schism between agricultural laborers and others is widening, but further status distinctions within the Mexican American society have been slower to emerge." (Rubel, p. 22.)

Although the differences of rank within Mexican American society may not be clear, those between Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans are. In most of the Southwest, these are categorical, caste-like differences. As Rubel puts it, "No matter how highly ranked a chicano, he is subordinate to Anglos." (Rubel, p. 22.) Some of the more educated Mexican Americans--who occupy prestigious (professional and managerial) occupational niches in society because of their education--become Anglicized to the extent that they leave their Mexican American identity behind, moving "up and out" into Anglo society. However, this move out of chicano society is rarely complete for the first generation of such successful Mexican Americans.

Any system which is at all open--that is, not a totally closed caste order--provides for upward mobility. Where cultural and ethnic differences are involved, such upward mobility usually also involves some significant degree of acculturation and assimilation on the part of the minority group members. Mexican Americans who are upwardly mobile are more likely to belong to Protestant churches. "The inglesado ... hopes that his affiliation with a Protestant church will help him achieve social acceptance in the Anglo community. He sees conversion and the Protestant ethic as keys that will unlock the door to the Anglo world." (Madsen, p. 65.)

The extent to which the Mexican Americans are upwardly mobile is a matter of considerable disagreement among scholars. Donald Bogue concluded after analyzing 1950 census data that "... of all ethnic groups in the United States, the Mexican Americans constitute the only ethnic group for which a comparison of the characteristics of the first and second generation fails to show a substantial intergenerational rise in socioeconomic status ..." (Bogue, p. 372.) The most recent report of the U.C.L.A. Mexican American Study Project, however, concludes that there is considerable intergenerational upward mobility. (U.C.L.A. Mexican American Study Project, Progress Report No. 10, p. 10.)

Doubtless there is upward mobility, and it is almost certainly increasing. However, there are formidable obstacles

in the situation of most Mexican Americans. One is the high visibility which their Indian facial features and pigmentation guarantee, especially in Texas where the Anglo (Northern European) population predominates among Caucasians. Another is the high visibility which language and culture generally provides. Still another is the lack of a time orientation toward the future and the absence of the "Protestant ethic" which characterizes Anglo Americans, Protestant or Catholic. Still another obstacle is the large family system; it is clear from research evidence that success in school is much less likely when the child comes from a home with many siblings. (Heller, p. 32.)

A final obstacle to upward mobility requires separate comment, namely, the "up and out" pattern of mobility which has characterized the successfully mobile in the past. This has resulted in resentment on the part of those who are less successful in their striving, or on the part of those who choose to remain in the group. Sheldon, discussing the "up and out" pattern in Los Angeles, says:

> "Among his friends there is a strong and sometimes bitter feeling toward certain persons who have used positions of leadership or potential leadership in the Mexican community for their own personal advancement, especially those who move out of the Southwest, typically to take jobs in Washington. These people are described as opportunists who marry an Anglo girl and "become Spanish grandees," no longer defining themselves as of Mexican descent." (Sheldon, p. 156.)

However, Sheldon testifies to the fact that a considerable amount of such upward mobility, including geographic mobility which results in vicinal separation from the ghetto, is taking

place in Los Angeles, (Sheldon, p. 135.) and presumably elsewhere as well.

One of the consequences of successful (up and out) mobility is that it removes those from the community who might best serve as success models for those who remain. If being a Mexican American is held as desirable in the Mexican American community and if those who succeed in getting an education and a better job give up their Mexicanness, the reaction of the youth can only be that these are incompatible expectations. As a Mexican American college student replied to Dr. Heller when she asked him if anyone in his neighborhood had become successful, "Yes, but he moved away and, as far as the boys are concerned, he is no longer Mexican." (Heller, p. 93.) She concludes, however, that there is an increasing tendency on the part of successful Mexican Americans to stress their ties with the Mexican American community, and "their very existence probably plays a part in the new mobility orientation of Mexican American youth." (Heller, p. 93.)

The foregoing presents a kind of profile of the culture and social structure of the Mexican Americans of the Southwest. Those things which are generally known (their poverty, their low educational level, etc.) have been avoided, directing the remarks instead to what is hoped to be an explication of why they behave as they do--why they drop out of school, why they aren't motivated in the same way and toward the same things as Anglo Americans, why they don't join PTA's and other organizations, why they aren't necessarily overjoyed at the prospect of becoming Anglicized, and so on. To each of you

remains the task of applying these ideas to your situations as counselors of Mexican American youth in our schools and communities.

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THE MEXICAN AMERICAN PRESCHOOL CHILD

Excerpts from a Speech by
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THE MEXICAN AMERICAN PRESCHOOL CHILD

Preschool children are much alike, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. However, Mexican American youngsters possess some special characteristics because of their unique heritage, culture, and language.

Consider, for example, the conflicts experienced by Mexican American children generally referred to as deprived, or disadvantaged, or underprivileged. They are the group Oscar Lewis calls the "culture of poverty." All persons in the culture of poverty have similar characteristics, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. But Mexican American children have a compilation of disadvantages. The majority of them come from a background of poverty which is defeating and debilitating. And, in addition, they come from a different cultural heritage which conflicts with the dominant culture creating a double problem for Mexican American children.

One of the biggest problems today in educating Mexican American children is that the system of education is middle-class oriented. Thus, the school has some of the typical middle-class prejudices against Mexican American children, or any children of poverty. Although this is probably not an intentional bigotry, it is an unyielding and inflexible state of mind which holds middle-class society as "best" and "unquestionably right." If one considers a culture inferior, quaint, and in need of change simply because it is not like his own, isn't this a form of prejudice?

When the Mexican American child first encounters the vast middle-class culture, he is usually made to feel different and, consequently, inferior. He is often told, "You're a Mexican American," and more often, "You're a

Mexican." He may never have realized before that he is different. There are many positive values in being Mexican. There is a proud heritage to admire. But pride in one's heritage is generally not instilled when he is labeled "different," and often "inferior," by the attitudes, inflections, and facial expressions of others.

The Mexican American child is a member of La Raza, and this is important. Teachers should present information about this heritage at the primary level and even at the preschool level. The child needs identity, and he needs to know himself. However, this knowledge must be given in a manner to provide security and positive self-identity — not insecurity and inferiority.

As soon as the child becomes aware that he is different, he realizes that he speaks a different language. Spanish is probably the only language he has heard all his life. Now, suddenly, English becomes his language. This language difficulty is one of the most restricting barriers existing in education today. A successful preschool language program is greatly needed in the area of compensatory education for young children. The preschool child should be taught in enriched, multisensory, first-hand, realistic situations where language has meaning.

The problem of speaking a different language is magnified because Mexican American children usually have a limited vocabulary in their own Spanish. These children are not bilingual. They are not really proficient in either language. The majority come from a background which Bernstein calls a "restricted language background." In addition to their limited positive experiences, they lack language development and ability to express

the meager experiences they have had. These children come into a school which speaks a different language and is built around an "elaborate language system." Their language is of expediency and brevity. They speak as occasion demands, but no more than is absolutely necessary.

In addition to his "restricted language," the Mexican American child has a problem in speaking this new language he finds in school because English has a rhythm, cadence and intonation completely foreign to him. Even if he knew what the word meant, he would have difficulty in pronouncing it. When the teacher wants to talk about monkeys, how is the Mexican American child supposed to know that she's talking about "changos?" If she wants to talk about the three billy goats gruff, how is he supposed to know that she is talking about "cheevas?" No wonder he has problems with the first grade topics.

The preschool years are the time to do something about this language barrier. Too many of these children are failing simply because they do not understand what the teacher is saying.

In the current organization of schools, the Mexican American children learn English during the first year of school, and then they get first grade content the second year. Frequently, they do not learn enough English the first year to complete first grade work the second, and, consequently, fail. Suddenly, they are already three years behind in school. This perpetual experience of constant failure frequently frustrates the student and he becomes a "dropout." Because of the organization of the curriculum of many schools, "pushout" may be a better word.

An important cultural difference is time orientation. Middle-class future time orientation defers gratification. The child waits six weeks for report cards to find out how well he is doing in school. Mexican American children have to know immediately; gratification must be now. Time-orientation is also the pace of life. In Spanish, the clocks "walk" instead of "run." The middle-class value placed on rushing and hurrying conflicts with the Mexican American child's basic ebb and flow of life. He is concerned with living and tasting life today ("Work a little, rest a little" as the Spanish saying goes).

The idea of "machismo" is another characteristic. Being "muy macho," or very much a man, is most important in the Mexican culture. There should be more men in the primary schools and preschools to serve as models of masculinity. Frequently a young boy trying to grow up and prove his manhood dislikes taking orders from a woman. He dislikes it, and he often rebels against it. Although this is a problem for all young males, it is especially a problem for the Mexican American lad whose culture teaches that a man must prove his manhood, while a woman must be submissive. Some studies have shown a 5 to 1 ratio of academic failures when comparing boys to girls. Could this be attributed to the fact that most of the teachers with whom boys come in contact in these early years are women?

There are other differences between the cultures. An important one has to do with the concept of the supernatural. The middle-class concept is that "I am the captain of my fate. I am the master of my soul. I'll work out my own destiny, and I'll make myself whatever I want to be." On the other hand, many Mexican Americans believe, "As God wills; it will come to pass." This is a most important difference. Most Anglo Americans

usually have a scientific explanation for all natural phenomena, while many Mexican Americans are quite willing to accept supernatural explanations to various phenomena. They can accept the fact that God makes it rain, instead of getting confused by condensation and precipitation. However, using supernatural explanations for many illnesses compounds the health problems of many of these children. Texas, for example, has the highest rate of tuberculosis in the United States; and the incidence is highest among the Mexican American population.

There are many other health problems that must be solved for these children. Many of the Title I, Headstart, and other compensatory preschool programs provide physical examinations of these young children. Culture, once again, is an important factor. A young child might come to school with something all dried and shriveled and black on a string around his neck. The teacher may find out that "that awful thing" is the eye of a deer to protect him from mal de ojo or the power of the strong eye — the evil eye. This is a basic part of the child's culture, but teacher wants it removed.

The food eaten by low-class Mexican Americans is usually quite different from that of the dominant culture. Frequently, a combination of cultural differences and low income creates inadequate nutrition for the children. Many of them come to school hungry. Teachers then wonder why they are not paying attention. The truth may be that the child does not have the physical energy for prolonged periods of concentration. However, at the same time the school is providing nutrition, teacher attitude is again important. Frequently a stigma is placed on children who receive free lunches. For example, the teacher may say, "Now boys and girls,

everyone who has their lunch money, bring it up here." And they bring it up. "Oh, Jose, you're on free lunch today." The child is made to feel different -- to feel inferior -- to feel like a charity case.

In summary -- the preschool, Mexican American, Spanish-speaking, bicultural child has many problems. Frequently, his basic human needs (nutrition, health, clothing, shelter, affection) are not met. And, in addition, he lacks the basic need of experiencing success. Everyone must experience success if he is to maintain mental and physical health. Constant failure is both damaging and torturous to children. Schools often reinforce feelings of failure in these children. Rich learning experiences must be provided for children in which they can gain confidence in themselves through success. Programs should be designed to meet the specific needs of individual children rather than organized according to the school's tastes. Flexible programs should be designed to replace rigid, lifeless curriculums. Therefore, schools should cooperatively plan programs to meet the needs of all young children -- especially the preschool child -- and especially the preschool Mexican American child.

COUNSELING WITH MEXICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN

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COUNSELING WITH MEXICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN

I have borrowed the theme of this presentation -- "No High Adobe!" from a little book by Dorothy L. Pillsbury. "You won't have any privacy without a wall," she was warned when she first settled in her little adobe house in Santa Fe. But Miss Pillsbury ignored the advice and was happy that her yard became a thoroughfare and a neighborhood crossroads. "I clung to the thought," she wrote, "that people might decorate my adobe soil even better than peaches ripening on ruffle-leaved trees or hollyhocks reaching for the housetop. . ."[1]

As I read of the pleasure Miss Pillsbury felt in the freedom of her neighbors to come and go, their willingness to share with her their gifts and regard, I wondered. What walls have we put up in the school lives of our Mexican American children -- walls that may shut us away from a relationship which might enrich our own lives with the interest and beauty of different vistas?

I see my role as counselor with Mexican American children as a leveler of walls. May there be no high adobe! But if we are to level walls, we must know something about their construction. What are the bricks that march one after the other, each day another layer to wall our Mexican American children from the education and self-fulfillment they might otherwise discover? What is the mortar that holds the bricks stout against the assault of those who would escape and the attempts of those who would enter?

The wall begins to form when a child first enters school, bereft of the warmth of his family, faced with tasks he does not understand, instructed in

a language foreign to him, punished sometimes for nameless sins he does not know he has committed. These bricks I know well, and many others. The mortar which holds them in place is plastered from both sides — mortar composed of ignorance, fear, and prejudice, reinforced by apathy or indifference. A stout and formidable wall it may be, but one that may still be breached by those who care, who look for new tools, and who have some knowledge and experience in the art of leveling walls.

Many people must work together to level the walls — teachers, principals, counselors, nurses, social workers, parents, and the children themselves. But today I am going to speak for myself of the adventures I have had with certain children, the tools we used, and the success we experienced in pushing away some of the bricks in their walls.

One of the things we found out early -- these children and I — was that if certain bricks are pushed out, the rest of the wall will tumble, leaving a rubble that a quick and questing child may leap over, or a persistent one may tunnel through. What are these keystones that bar the way? I have found them to be loss of identity and self-negation, discouragement and the resulting indifference toward learning, alienation from the school environment, and conflict between home and school values.

How did I, an elementary school counselor, help Lupe, one small Mexican American boy, to gain a positive regard for himself? I let him experience it, to find out with me that he is a person worthy of respect, someone another can like and enjoy. But how did I help him to make this discovery? I did not say to him, "Hey, boy, you're a good kid. I like you. You're fun," although that approach might have a certain merit. Lupe knew little

of my language and I, less of his. We had, though, the universal language of play. I carry with me, in my job as a traveling counselor, a woven red bag, soft and bulgy, guaranteed to awaken the curiosity of any child, certainly one as inquiring as Lupe. It is a bag of toys which gives me entry to a child's world. What did Lupe think of me, this woman who threw a plastic football in a school building, tossed bean bags, and let him shoot her toy shotgun? Did he think it strange that she talked with fuzzy hand puppets, had a little red trunk full of doll people, and a pot of play dough? I cannot say what he thought, but he acted as if he enjoyed himself and that he knew someone else enjoyed him.

At times I work with (or should I say enjoy?) children in groups. We often make booklets — usually called "Thinking About Me." If I can find a polaroid camera and film, I make instant portraits for each child to put on the cover of his book. Depending on the age and verbal abilities of the children, the book is developed about what the child likes, does not like, what makes him feel important or makes him feel that people do not like him, and who he will be in twenty years. Lack of literary ability is no barrier. Children like to dictate their thoughts to the counselor. They particularly like the portable electric typewriter, because they can "hear it think." Children at play are often able to win a shy girl or boy into their activities. This experience of being needed and wanted helps to bolster the child's self-esteem. I have an instamatic movie camera and a cartridge projector easy for the children to handle. They are charmed to see themselves on film at play with the puppets, the doll people, the clay, or other counseling toys. Children enjoy seeing and hearing themselves and knowing "they really are they."

Sometimes children continue to feel inadequate in the schoolroom even though they may see themselves as enjoyed and appreciated in counseling. They may have acquired many skills of learning which are walled off by their conviction that they cannot learn. One, Ernest, a fourth-grade boy, was referred because of apathy toward his academic work, inability to spell, and poor comprehension in reading. Certainly, he was not apathetic in the counseling room. He was the most gifted of puppeteers and entered into play with the little people with great gusto. It was only when schoolwork was mentioned that the door closed. With impassive face, he would say, "I'm just dumb." One of his brothers was in the class for the mentally retarded, and Ernest appeared to fear such placement for himself. I had given Ernest an individual intelligence test and knew that his intelligence, even as measured by that instrument, was not deficient. The problem was that Ernest held no belief in his own ability. I felt that should he get an A on a paper, even once, he would have some strength on which to build a better concept of himself as a learner. Spelling seemed to be the subject with the most prospect for success. Using a "magic method" which I guaranteed unconditionally, I taught Ernest his spelling words. We wrote each one in the air, spelled it out loud, closed our eyes and imagined it, wrote it on the desk with our fingers, pressing down hard, and then wrote the word three times on paper, no more, checking each time to see that we were correct. With that word learned, we added another to the list until all were mastered. The next period was his spelling class. The magic held, and Ernest made an A in spelling. He was radiant. The next time he came for counseling, I asked him if he wished to study his spelling. He replied most solemnly and sincerely, "You have taught me to spell very well. Today you may teach me to read." This task was not so easy, but his teacher is now doing a good job with him. Ernest and I often read books together,

sometimes poetry which, perhaps, he does not always understand but loves intensely. Each time he takes a book away with him, one we have shared -- sometimes one that he can read and sometimes one that he cannot. He always says as he leaves, "I love books!" His teacher is interested and perceptive. She is able, now that Ernest has opened the door, to find many strengths that were not formerly available.

When a child has learned to respect himself and feels respected, the other bricks in the wall are more easily pried loose -- the bricks of alienation and conflicting values.[2] The Mexican American child's concept of time may lead to much conflict with school authorities. Perhaps because I share something of his value -- that this moment is one to be enjoyed and will not come again -- I have left most of this learning experience to be instilled by principal and teacher. Time did, however, become a matter of concern with one child who was depressed and overwhelmed by the time it took him to do his school assignments. I felt he needed help with his burden. The boy was fascinated by my stopwatch. I suggested that he keep the watch for a week and record the number of minutes it took him for each assignment. All the time he was working, the watch would be saying, "Tick-tick--good boy--tick-tick." The watch may have been immediate reinforcement, or it may have been a symbol of companionship; whatever it was, the child found himself able to cope with the pressures which had previously been too much for him.

The Mexican American child's attitude of, "What will be, will be." can be both irritating to his teachers and a block in his progress toward becoming a self-directed person. To help children develop their ability to predict probable outcomes of behavior, I have used what I call "counsel-

ing cards" in much the same way as the cards in the Thematic Apperception Test. The pictures are of school scenes with children in situations presenting problems common to most children. The child being counseled is asked to tell a story on a tape recorder concerning the situations in the pictures, and to devise different ways the problem might be solved. Most children enjoy this projection and are capable of transposing the incidents to their own experience. We discuss what we are doing and why, so that there will be no feeling that someone is being tricked into telling on himself. We listen to the story and discuss what it might mean. The child may agree, disagree, or, perhaps, smile in a secret way. He may, in this fashion, develop a sense of consequence and a desire to determine his own actions.

Playing with hand puppets helps children to learn to recognize their emotions and to discover that a person may have different emotions about the same thing. A child chooses one puppet to say all the happy, good feelings, and another all the sad, bad things. Thus, children may develop a background and strength for dealing with ambivalent feelings about their home culture and school values. We hope that our Mexican American children may find the best of both their worlds and that they may, at least, recognize their right to own opposing feelings.

I am sure you are wondering how I reconcile individual intelligence testing with my account of "total regard." Such a reconciliation is not easy, particularly when the test is part of an evaluation for special education. One of the ugliest, toughest bricks in the wall is the excessive number of Mexican American children who have been placed in the classes for the mentally retarded -- children who are not achieving in school, certainly;

children who are frightened, yes; discouraged, yes; mentally retarded -- often not.[3] School people salve their consciences by saying, "Well, there is where he is functioning. He will get better instruction there, where he can work at his own level." But will he? I read not long ago of an experiment with rats.[4] Graduate students in a psychology class were asked to record the time it took two groups of rats to run a maze. One group, they were told, was a trained group who had had experience in running the maze. The other group was a naive group. These rats were inexperienced. Just as was expected, the experienced rats were successful in running the maze in less time than the naive group in every trial. The experiment, the graduate students thought, proved that rats could learn by experience. What it really proved was that rats live up to what is expected of them. Neither group had had previous experience. If rats can tell what is expected of them, do you think children cannot, even though they speak Spanish?

Attempts have been made to equalize tests for Spanish speaking children by giving instructions in Spanish,[5] but even then items are often culture laden. A better estimate may be gained by using non-verbal tests such as the Raven Matrices, the Nebraska Test of Learning Aptitude, or the Arthur Point Scale. Far too few counselors or psychologists have access to a variety of tests or take the trouble to do multiple testing.

One day a child may be a little boy or girl confused by the school environment and knowing little English, but in all other respects a normal child. The next day he is mentally retarded. Fortunately, research is being conducted toward evaluating the validity of commonly used tests and the development of others more suitable to the Mexican American child.

When it becomes my duty to evaluate a child for special education, I talk with him, play with him, record how well he does in certain games, motivating him, I hope, to do his best on the "games" on the intelligence test. I told one little boy to use all the words he had to paint a picture with words just as he had used his blocks to make designs. Asked to define the word, "diamond," he searched for words to convey his meaning. Finally he said, "It's like sunshine on new shoes." I think he had the concepts of glitter and great value, but you will not find his answer in the WISC manual.

I have given this personal account, hoping that I may find recruits in my task of leveling walls. Perhaps my counseling role may seem strange to you -- sometimes that of teacher, or psychometrist, or even librarian -- but the children and I have been able to reconcile these many faces as one belonging to a counselor. We have used the tools we have found or devised to pry away the bricks in their walls -- bricks of self-negation, discouragement and despair, conflicting values, and alienation. Perhaps many of you may not find out ways useful or suitable to your style of counseling. If not, I ask each to seek out his own tools and join us in our challenge, "No high adobe!"

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THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER IN THE MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

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Lubbock Public Schools, Lubbock

THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER IN THE MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Today the Mexican Americans are undergoing acculturation in the American melting pot, but may seem to be well-insulated against the melting process. They cherish much of their Mexican cultural heritage as too precious and valid to be abandoned. These same Mexican beliefs and customs are regarded by other Americans as too superstitious and un-American to be tolerated. Their proximity to Mexico, which permits frequent visits keeping their "image of the homeland" alive, and the discriminatory actions of the Anglos have been two powerful factors that have acted as deterrents to assimilation. The Mexican American usually lives in an area which is predominantly Spanish-speaking, thus he rarely has an opportunity to form a relationship with an Anglo which would encourage him to adopt Anglo customs. The Mexican child in the middle-class, Anglo world faces a serious dilemma. The children and grandchildren of the original migrants have inherited the physical characteristics and acquired some of the cultural characteristics of their parents and grandparents. They have also been exposed, in varying degrees, to many Anglo cultural elements. They are caught between two cultures whose values and ways are sometimes contradictory. They see their parents and grandparents behaving in one way and Anglos behaving in another. They are taught one set of values and practices at home and a different set at school.

The Mexican American thinks of himself as both a citizen of the United States and a member of "La Raza" — The Race. This term refers to all Mexican Americans who are united by cultural and spiritual bonds derived from God. The Mexican recognizes regional variations in behavior and realizes that customs change.

In all aspects of existence, the Mexican sees a balance of opposites. Pain is balanced by pleasure, life by death, creation by destruction, illness by health, and desire by denial. Pain must follow pleasure, and a hangover must follow a drunk. God's ledger sheet is held to be exact and without error.

Among the Mexican people, it is generally believed that the good or bad fortune of the individual is predestined and every occurrence in human existence comes to pass because it was fated to do so. This fatalistic philosophy produces an attitude of resignation, which often convinces the Anglo that the Mexican lacks drive and determination. What the Anglo tries to control, the Mexican tries to accept. Misfortune is something the Anglo tries to overcome, and the Mexican views as fate. The Mexican lives for today instead of creating a blueprint for the future.

Mexican American society rests firmly on a foundation of family solidarity and the concept of male superiority. The manly Mexican repays an insult to himself or family -- perhaps many months later. The worst sin a Mexican can conceive is to violate his obligations to his parents and family. Husband and wife share the joint obligation of teaching their children how to conduct themselves with dignity and honor in any social situation. In addition to serving as models, parents are supposed to instruct their children within the home and expose them to experiences outside the home that will prepare them for adult life. An "educated" person is one who has been well trained as a social being. Informal education within the family is viewed as more important than formal schooling. The Mexican family is strongly patriarchal. While there has recently been some modification in his absolute rule, the Mexican male still dominates his family. The older

son follows the father in authority. Even though mother and children are subordinated, the females are protected by the male members of the family; and the mother is revered. In case of illness, the girls assume the mother's responsibilities in the home. Mexicans feel it is wrong to criticize the beliefs of others and even more inexcusable to try to change them. This is a major factor in the hostility felt toward missionaries and others who are trying to change Mexican beliefs. It is quite customary for in-laws to become members of the larger household. The extended family also includes co-parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Since the majority of Mexican Americans are Catholic, they use the names Jesus and Marie to show honor and respect for God who is all powerful. Their interpretations of Catholicism vary with class and education. The lower class and a large part of the middle class hold to Spanish-Indian beliefs derived from Mexican folk Catholicism. Such beliefs are the despair of priests! Conversion appears to offer a solution to multiple problems faced by the individual trapped between two cultures. Conversion to Protestantism may give him moral support in the struggle for socioeconomic mobility if he adopts the dictum that "God helps those who help themselves."

Another area which is undergoing some changes is the area of medicine. Despite growing reliance on physicians for treatment of those diseases recognized both by folk medicine and scientific medicine, Mexicans believe that other folk diseases can be cured only by folk medicine. Prominent among the ailments peculiar to folk medicine are bewitchment, evil eye, fright, and fallen fontanel. The folk diseases are completely alien to medical science and are labeled as superstitions. Medical denial of the existence of such diseases is taken as evidence of the limited knowledge of

physicians. It is not unusual for a family to journey to Mexico in search of a "carandero" and to remain there until the loved one is well.

Children who are in our junior and senior high schools have attained a higher level of education than that of their parents. Many parents have the equivalent of a third grade education or less -- some state that their education consisted of learning to work and accepting family responsibilities. If parents have not had formal education, they feel little need to send their children to public schools. Parents, too, are affected by the children's school experiences. The school activities will bring them closer into contact with Anglos and thus expose them to Anglo culture and ways. Because they do not feel comfortable at school, parents do not participate in all activities. They are usually in attendance when their children take part in a program at school. As yet they do not see or come in contact with many persons of Mexican descent in professions outside of education. When he does see one of his own, he revers, fears, accepts, or rejects him. He views the professional as in a position he cannot attain for himself or for his children. As he looks about him and wonders about his occupational, educational and status opportunities; about the section of town and the house in which he lives; about his role models; about his socioeconomic status and the opportunities open to him; he is likely not to be inspired to great effort.

The greatest need at the moment is to give financial assistance and encouragement starting at the elementary level and working upward through higher education. However, Mexican Americans have gradually begun to accept the schools and to see in them an opportunity for their children to learn English and to acquire the traits that will help them in the Anglo

society. Perhaps Mexican Americans' traditional distrust of the schools grew out of the early schools' unsuitability of curriculum, teaching methods, and language instruction. Because of this, the parents made little attempt to impose regular attendance upon the children, and they dropped out of school as soon as possible. In recent years, two things have happened to improve the situation:

(1) The basis for state-alloted school funds in most states has been changed from the annual school census, regardless of school attendance, to the average daily attendance; this has in creased the efforts of school officials to maintain high school attendance, and

(2) Through the Mendez case in Texas (1948) and other cases, the courts have restrained school districts and their officers from segregating pupils of Mexican descent in separate schools or classes. However, as long as segregated housing continues, segregated schooling will not have been dealt its death blow.

The schools have not met the needs of the Spanish-speaking. It is easier and safer to prohibit the speaking of Spanish on the school ground and in the school (the need being to learn English) than to take the imaginative step of teaching both English and Spanish to both Anglos and Spanish-speaking students beginning in the elementary school. As a result, the "educated" Spanish-speaking person who has survived the school system is likely also to be one who has been stripped of his native language, or at best speaks and writes it imperfectly. To the enlightened, this situation is such a waste of human resources; to others, including some school teachers,

the burden of proof is on the shoulders of the minority; "If you want to be American, speak American." It is the opportunity and responsibility of the schools to understand these antagonistic forces and help resolve them.

Parents of different cultures have different expectations for their children. Think of the differences between the Anglo middle class and the lower-class Mexican as they are associated with the following expectations of the adolescent: parents do not especially care whether children finish school, nor do they feel any particular disadvantage because they do not attend school a certain number of years; good grades are not important; children are allowed to spend what money they have as they wish; boys, especially, are encouraged to fight for their rights (The strong dominance of the male in the Mexican culture makes it extremely difficult for the adolescent boy to accept the female teacher. It is highly desirable that the Mexican child have men teachers. When he is rejecting of the teacher, it is possible that he may also be rejecting of the material taught or even of the school); children are taught fear of the law and policemen; honesty and frankness are used in dealing with social situations; stress is placed on getting a job and accepting financial responsibility; little emphasis is placed on using correct English or Spanish (They have their own Tex-Mex); marriage will likely be early with family responsibility; courtship and dating practices are very strict; boys and girls are not encouraged to bring their friends home because the home will be viewed as one in which family ties are not strong and dishonor may come if any and all kinds of people are allowed to be entertained in the home; courtship is conducted at special dances, fiestas, church meetings and at any public gathering.

The rapid social changes in the dominant Anglo culture disturbs the native-born, English-speaking child. Think of the disturbances it must cause the child of minority group origin! The adult who attempts cultural transfer from conservative Mexican to middle-class Anglo society meets many problems too. Acceptance in either society may be difficult or impossible to obtain. The "inglesade" (Anglicized) is outcast by conservative Mexican society and frequently refused acceptance by Anglo society. He is caught in the no man's land between two cultures and feels that he does not belong in either community.

The teaching and helping professionals must ask themselves if they have a true hold on children's imaginations and on community demands. Professionals have to know much more about different cultural and lower socioeconomic groups to perform their responsibilities adequately. They have to know how to secure special information not yet recorded, much less systematized. They have to think on at least three levels:

(1) they must keep track of the job to be done;

(2) discover how to communicate this through veils of minority resentments and unfamiliarities, and also through the prime values of minority traditions and their American adaptations; and

(3) they must lead school youngsters to trust in them despite the resentments and unfamiliarities the persons from minorities feel.

School goals should include these things: to establish contact with families who normally ignored school communications and who otherwise played

no role in school activities; to develop a school-home relationship with these families; to provide information and guidance to help the families guide their youngsters; to help the parents motivate and encourage their youngsters to improve their performances in school; to help parents and the youngsters toward appropriate goals; to help the families and youngsters appreciate their own culture and to accept standards of school performance both socially and academically. To this end, government, voluntary groups, and individual effort should be mobilized to achieve a society that assures opportunities for all people, regardless of physical and personal handicaps, place of residence, age, religion, or race.

Assuring opportunities for all people challenges all our talents for compromise and public relations. The task is lightened for those who can sense the line that integration of minorities must follow. Keyed-up awareness of other groups, only recently called minorities, is essential to the American outlook. What is new today is that instead of fighting their efforts to rise to equality, we have decided to help them all the way. We must help them in terms they comprehend and accept, as well as in terms professional workers can accept. The future of a united America rests upon the outcome.